

NEW LIGHT ON GERMANY'S TREACHERY

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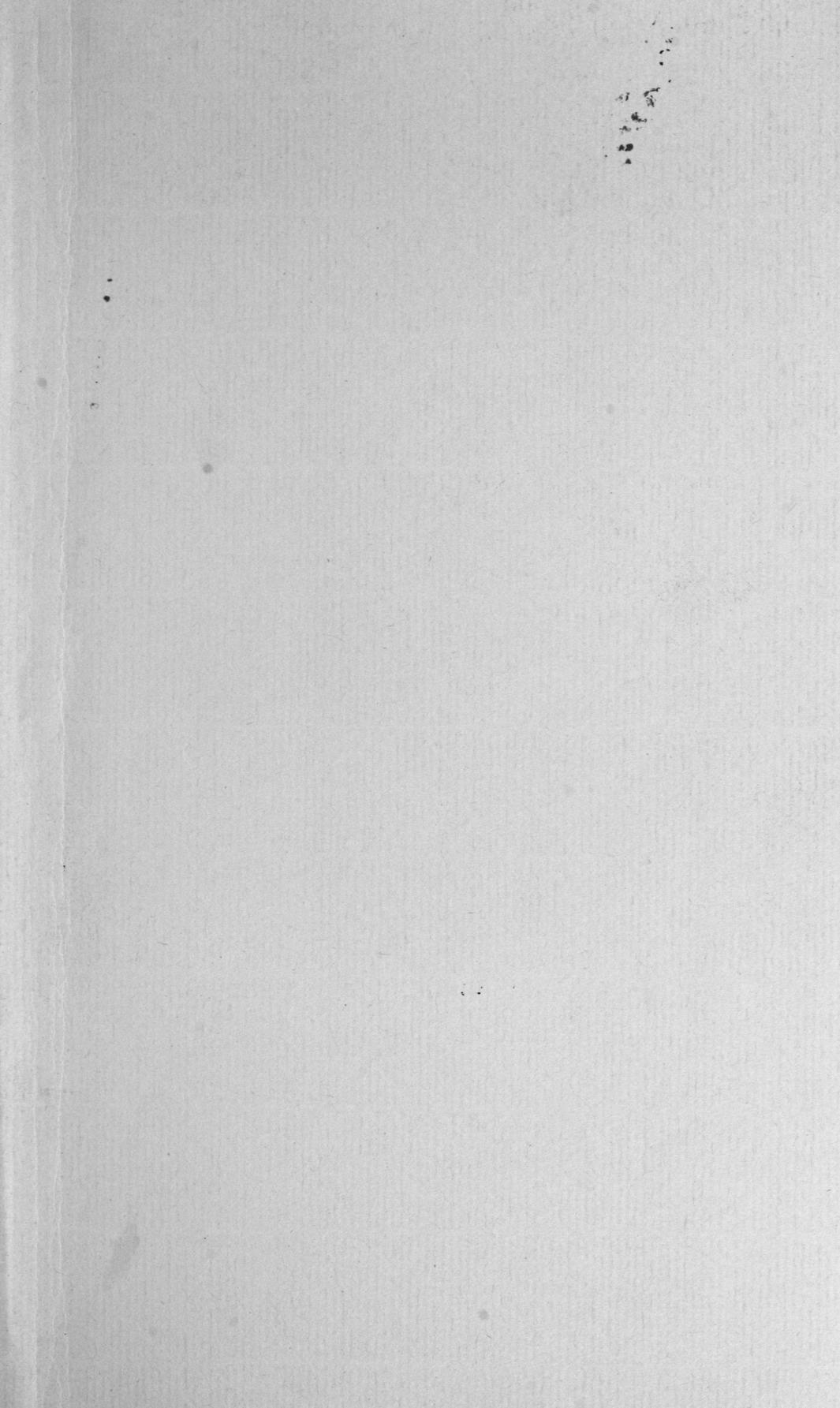
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THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

June, 1917.

June

Wilson, Herbert Wrigley

NEW LIGHT ON GERMANY'S TREACHERY:

A REMARKABLE FRENCH INDICTMENT

The wrongs against which we now array ourselves are not common wrongs; they cut to the very root of human life.—President WILSON.

THE confusion and darkness which shrouded Europe in the first dreadful weeks of the War prevented a critical study of Germany's military and diplomatic methods in the last hours before the Kaiser delivered his attack. Gradually, as men have recovered from the stupor into which the roar of battle and the crash of falling kingdoms plunged them, they have begun to scrutinise the statements of German diplomacy in the light of facts, evidence and records which were not known in 1914. In a French work recently published (*Le Mensonge du 3 Août, 1914*, Payot, Paris) with the help of much information supplied by the French War Office from its archives, the whole series of falsehoods told by the German Government on and before the declaration of war with France is examined in masterly fashion. This is a work of great importance for future history. It has immediate value as proving the extraordinary untruthfulness and perfidy of German diplomacy.

No one pretends that diplomats in the past have always told the truth. But that a Government should invariably and habitually lie in its intercourse with other Powers and in its utterances to its own subjects is something new in civilised life. After all, from of old untruthfulness has always been regarded as dishonourable. The Persians were taught to 'ride well, draw the bow, and speak the truth.' The philosophy of Greece inculcated 'an adamantine faith in truthfulness and right.' The Romans in their greatest days kept their word, as the story of Regulus indicates, and did not usually make war without an honest declaration. Their respect for law as something above the individual state was their noblest legacy to mankind, and among the peoples whom they civilised it has never wholly died out. Among modern Germans even Haeckel—who has replaced Christianity by something which he regards as much finer and

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The future of the Empire of the Hapsburgs is all comprised in these ten articles, from which these consequences follow :

(a) Strengthening of the political and military alliance with Germany, by an economic union of the two countries so complete that treaties will be concluded in common as for a single country ;

(b) Modification of the constitution to secure the political hegemony of the Germans in parliament (the division of Bohemia into artificial zones would blunt all the arms of the Czech separatists) ;

(c) Strengthening of the German power and suppression of the Slav minorities in Cisleithania by the removal of the Galician deputies from the Reichsrat ;

(d) Systematic Germanisation of the non-German populations by the imposition of German as the official language.

We conclude that, between her Germanisation and the irredentism of her subjects, Austria constitutes a permanent danger for Europe. It is necessary then to free the subject peoples from her yoke, while preventing the German portion from uniting itself with Germany and thereby increasing the power of the latter.

War is an institution innate in human society. It cannot be abolished. All the proposals that men have made, are making, and will make to abolish it are only the expression of their desire for a rest that is not granted them. They are an effect of war, a reaction from its violence and its sorrow. But, for this very reason, statesmen and nations are bound to extirpate the evil roots, to eliminate as many of the existing causes of war as they can, and, when a war is waged, it should have a salutary effect in preventing others for the generation to come. Austria is an evil root and must be extirpated.

It is not possible to actualise the Kingdom of Heaven upon the earth, the kingdom of absolute justice and absolute good, as democrats and revolutionaries dream. But, nevertheless, the peoples should strive towards national and international systems of ever greater moral sanity ; when they wage war, they should seek to purify the moral atmosphere in which they live together, for the longest possible future. Now the European moral atmosphere has to be purified from Austria and from Turkey. And this is surely understood no less in England than in Italy ; for, if Austria is undoubtedly the antithesis of Italy, the evil Empire of the Hapsburgs is likewise the antithesis of the liberal, open, world-wide constructive British Empire.

ENRICO CORRADINI.

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nobler—bids his countrymen worship ‘the true, the beautiful, the good.’ How they did it in practice *Le Mensonge* shall show.

On no point has German diplomacy laid such stress as on this, that Germany did not mobilise till Russia had done so, and did not give the order to mobilise till 5 P.M. of August 1, 1914. This is the foundation of the German case as it has been laid before neutrals and ‘pacifists.’ The date and even the hour of mobilisation are of capital importance, because the Power which is first ready for war gains a stupendous advantage. The process of mobilisation is complicated. It consists, first, of the embodiment of the reservists in the various units at the points where they are stationed. When the units have been brought to war strength they are then moved by train to the points from which they begin their deployment. The ‘covering troops’ on the frontier are placed in position to resist raids. When the deployment has taken place the army begins operations against the enemy. The whole process in France and Germany occupies six to seven days, and if each army had started fair, the French would have been ready at the same time as the Germans. Russia from her bad railway system and vast extent required at least fourteen to eighteen days to mobilise. She was therefore the one Power who could endanger nobody by beginning her mobilisation in advance of others.

The Allies have long suspected or indeed vaguely known that Germany lied throughout in pretending that Russia mobilised first by stealth, though the fact that the Germans regarded that unproved charge as justifying their own mobilisation is in itself a sharp comment on the acts of treachery which *Le Mensonge* drags to light, its evidence supplementing that contained in the diplomatic documents published by the Allied Governments on the outbreak of war and giving the following new points.

In the spring of 1914 Germany made great preparations which pointed to the imminence of war. She bought a very large quantity of corn. In May 1914 she provided numbers of beds and hospital stores. In the same month she got ready for what her Staff, with a touch of sardonic humour, called ‘exceptional grand manœuvres,’ involving the concentration of 500,000 men close to the French frontier in August. In July 1914 German merchants in France hastily sent in their bills, called in debts, and disposed of their stock. The German Government suddenly laid an embargo on the supplies of foreign motor tyres in Germany, or in plain English, seized them. When the Kaiser left for Norway on the 5th of July, there is good reason for saying that everything had been arranged. His absence was carefully designed to throw the Entente off its guard and give the German Staff an opportunity of stealthily mobilising the German army.

The published reports of the French Embassy in Berlin show that the German mobilisation began in secret on the 21st of July. Certain new and important facts are brought to light in *Le Mensonge*. On the night of July 24 the colonels of the German regiments at Metz gave their officers the secret instructions—never divulged till the eve of war—as to the duty of the ‘covering force’ on the outbreak of war. Machine guns were mounted on Düsseldorf station and high buildings near it. On the 25th the railway stations throughout Germany were occupied by the military, and on this and the two following days a movement by train of cavalry, artillery and infantry towards the Belgian frontier began. On the 27th the French observed German infantry taking post along the frontier and barbed wire being laid. Men on leave were ordered to rejoin. German officers of the reserve at Antwerp were secretly instructed at once to depart for their regiments. That same day five classes of reservists were called up.

A reference to the *Statistisches Jahrbuch für das Deutsche Reich* of 1915 will show that the total number of men in these five classes was over 1,250,000. By the same authority the strength of the German army on the peace footing was 800,646, though French experts believe that its real force was nearer 900,000. But, accepting German figures, on the 27th Germany was mobilising at least 2,050,000 men, or more than double the total force placed in the field in 1870 for the attack on France, when she mobilised 1,010,000 men. She was at the same time assuring the British Government of her readiness to ‘mediate.’ Germany and Austria had apparently arranged between themselves that Austria should on this day attack Serbia. The German frontier ‘covering force’ began to deploy on the Luxemburg frontier and the Moselle, and great movements were reported by the French in Alsace-Lorraine.

All the 28th and 29th German troops in field grey (the new war uniform) were pouring through Frankfurt and reservists from the countries bordering on Germany were arriving on German territory. Two large steamers of the Hamburg-Amerika line, loading for Chile and Central America at Antwerp, suddenly left for German ports. At Port Said a North-German Lloyd steamer which was due to sail for Marseilles stopped and waited under orders ‘to embark reservists.’ On the 29th the whole German ‘covering force’ was in position on the French frontier, touching the frontier posts. Thirty military trains that day passed between Metz and Treves. The 18th army corps was concentrating at Frankfurt. In Bavaria and Württemberg the army corps were marching west. Another large category of reservists, the Ersatz (about 1,500,000 strong according to the *Statistisches*

(*Jahrbuch*), received special preliminary notices by which their mobilisation would be automatically accomplished on the issue of a proclamation.

Germany had now 3,500,000 men actually mobilised or in process of mobilisation. All the preliminary steps had been taken without attracting any attention. She was ready to spring on France so soon as the proper pretext could be invented. That afternoon (of the 29th) the famous War Council met at Potsdam, and after contemplating all that had been gained by eight days of stealthy mobilisation, decided on war and the treacherous invasion of Belgium. That same day the German Ambassador in Petrograd informed the Russian Government of 'the decision of his Government to mobilise if Russia did not stop her military preparations,' which Russia had publicly announced and which, in fact, were limited to the military districts affected by Austria's action in previously mobilising eight army corps against Serbia.

Thus on the German theory it was right for Germany to carry out a general mobilisation without proclaiming a mobilisation; it was wrong for Russia to take any action, however local, against the partial Austrian mobilisation which had been openly announced in the morning of the 29th. Late that evening the Czar replied to an effusive appeal made to him by the Kaiser, with a message which the German Government has never dared to print, asking the Kaiser why there was such a difference between the tone of his personal telegram and the German Ambassador's threatening summons, and ending with an offer to submit the Austro-Serbian question to the Hague Conference. The Kaiser and Herr Bethmann-Hollweg rejected this proposal off-hand. But for some diplomatic reason the two plotters decided late in that night to delay the public proclamation of the German mobilisation. It may have been because they feared that Austria might break away if they went too fast.

Now happened the mysterious incident of the *Lokalanzeiger* on which *Le Mensonge* sheds much fresh light. It has always been known that soon after noon on the 30th of July the *Lokalanzeiger* published a special edition, announcing that the German mobilisation had been proclaimed. The edition was seized and, after waiting some appreciable time, the German Foreign Office telephoned to the French and Russian Embassies, at 2 P.M., to say the news was false. The Russian Ambassador was told that the paper had been printed in advance, 'to be ready for all eventualities.' This is a very curious story to those who know what a tight hand the German Government keeps on its Press. What makes it the more extraordinary is the new fact which is here brought to light, that not only the *Lokalanzeiger*, but also the *Berliner Neueste Nachrichten*, *Deutsche Zeitung*, *Deutsche*

Nachrichten, and *Deutsche Warte* 'simultaneously published the news at 1 P.M.' So that, as *Le Mensonge* points out, 'by a remarkable coincidence all these five journals conceived the same idea at once, to publish special editions prepared beforehand the day that the mobilisation was declared.' Not only this, but they all emitted the same special editions on the same day and at the same time! If the five editors had been told by some one high in authority that the German Government had decided to mobilise and that they could publish the news the incident would be explained. No other hypothesis suits the facts. The publication occurred (1) because some person present at the War Council had not been informed of the change of plan later in the night; (2) or having been informed, wished to force the Kaiser's hand; or (3) because the German Government deliberately decided to lay a trap for Russia and force her to mobilise.

It was not only Berlin that knew of the decision to issue the proclamation. Vienna had also received the news. This new fact is revealed, that the Berlin Correspondent of the *Neue Wiener Zeitung* at 10 A.M. on the 30th of July, at least two hours before the German editions had appeared, sent a telegram to his newspaper announcing that the mobilisation had been proclaimed, 'news which he had received from one of the Emperor's staff.' More than this, there is evidence that the mobilisation (or such part of it as had not already been carried out) did publicly begin on the 30th in many places. The intelligence service of the 20th French army corps at Nancy intercepted telephonic communications between Metz and Strassburg, announcing the beginning of the German mobilisation that evening. Belfort reported to the French Government that the mayor of Altmünsteröl, the frontier German station, who was a German reserve officer, had sent his family away and paid off his employees. In 'a very large neutral city' the German Consul-General openly summoned all German reservists to join at once.

On the 31st, at midday, the German Government played a new and very curious trick, announcing the proclamation of something which it described as *Kriegsgefahrzustand* (literally *war-danger-state*). It pretends that it instructed its Ambassador in Paris to inform the French Government on the 29th of July that *Kriegsgefahrzustand* 'does not mean the calling up of men' (this had already been generally accomplished) 'nor mobilisation' (though this was actually in full swing), but that it did indicate the situation was becoming 'more and more strained.' The French Ambassador in Berlin was told a different tale, that Germany must take 'grave measures of precaution' because of the general Russian mobilisation (which had not taken place) and had therefore proclaimed *Kriegsgefahrzustand*. The German

proclamation, however, announced not *a state of danger of war* but a *state of war* ('das Reichsgebiet . . . wird hierdurch in *Kriegszustand* erklärt'). The French Government has in its hands documents proving that a large number of reservists were automatically called out by the *Kriegszustand* proclamation. Presumably they belonged to the second and third line German armies which yet remained to be mobilised.

This *Kriegsgefahrzustand* was a myth and had no place in the German constitution. This trickery was perhaps intended to provoke France into taking precautions, when the German army would have fallen upon her. The excuse urged for it, that Russia mobilised first, is swept away by the statements of the Germans themselves. A telegram sent by the Kaiser to the Czar at 2 P.M. of the 31st of July, two hours after the *Kriegszustand* had been ordered, makes no allusion to the alleged Russian mobilisation. The first hint of it is in a telegram from the Kaiser to King George of the same day but evidently sent at a later hour, which says 'I have just heard from the Chancellor that intelligence has just reached him that Nicholas this *evening* has ordered the mobilisation of his entire army and fleet.' 'Evening' for Germans is the period from 5 to 10 P.M. The preparation and issue of the *Kriegszustand* proclamation would take some time, so that it must have been decided in the morning, at least six and possibly twelve hours before the German Staff knew anything of the Russian mobilisation. The English version, prepared by the German Government, of its case against Russia, says the Russian mobilisation 'was already ordered during the *afternoon* of the 31st of July.' Even this would have convicted the German Government had the German people been allowed to read it, so in the version submitted to them the word 'afternoon' was coolly changed to 'morning' (*Vormittag*). The German Government falsifies its own documents.

At midnight of the 31st Germany presented Russia with an ultimatum calling on the Russian Government to demobilise or else Germany would mobilise. Now followed another curious incident. At 7.10 P.M. of the 1st of August war was declared on Russia, but nothing was said of her mobilisation, and the *casus belli* was that 'she has thought it right to begin hostilities.' On the 2nd of August the German Foreign Secretary told the Austrian Ambassador that 'Russian troops have crossed the German frontier at Schwiddern.' The Russian Government has always strenuously denied that any such violation of German territory took place, and there can be little doubt that when the facts can be critically examined—which is not yet practicable—it will establish its case. There was a definite object in this German story. Austria was bound to support Germany in a

defensive but not in an offensive war. She was showing some signs of hesitation, as it seems quite certain that she wanted to destroy Serbia but not in the least to embark on a world-wide war. For a defensive war German territory must be violated. Hence this tale.

It is a strange fact, which has not before been pointed out, that in 1870 Bismarck invented a similar tale for the same purpose. In a contemporary work the story runs :

Before the French declaration of war had been handed over at Berlin on July 19 at noon, a body of Chasseurs d'Afrique crossed the Prussian frontier at Saarbrücken at 6 A.M., but were driven back by Uhlans. This was the first hostile act . . . committed before a formal declaration.—BOBSTAEDT and DWYER, *Franco-German War* (1873), p. 228.

No French force crossed the Prussian frontier on the 19th of July 1870. But the lie had a definite aim. Bavaria was bound to Prussia by a purely defensive alliance, and on the 19th she was wavering. That very day, after a heated debate in which this news seems to have played a part, her lower chamber voted for war, and on the 20th her upper chamber did so. The tale having served its end was then cynically dropped. Modern histories may be searched for it in vain.

Close upon this false charge against Russia followed a whole series of charges against France, professing that, as in 1870, her troops had attacked and treacherously entered German territory. The extreme antecedent improbability of such attack hardly needs to be mentioned. By the 1st of August the German first-line army was fully mobilised, while the mobilisation of the French army had not begun. That very day German troops treacherously entered the little neutral State of Luxemburg, a fact which is here disclosed for the first time, as it has hitherto been supposed that the German entry into Luxemburg did not take place before the 2nd. It is also admitted by the Kaiser in a telegram to King George that on the afternoon of the 1st of August he had ordered the German armies to attack France. At this juncture it seems suddenly to have occurred to somebody at Berlin, either the Kaiser or Herr Bethmann-Hollweg, that some plausible excuse for falling on a neighbour must be produced. As yet there was none. When early on the 2nd of August the ultimatum to Belgium was sent off, the Germans had thought of nothing better to say than that the French 'had the intention of violating Belgian territory.' Now they set their invention to work.

They manufactured no fewer than fifteen violations of the German frontier by the French as against Bismarck's one in 1870. The most famous of these was the alleged attack by

French airmen on the railways between Nuremberg and Kissingen and Ansbach, which was said to have taken place at 3.15 P.M. of the 2nd, before war was declared, and the news of which filled Germany with insane fury. Professor Wilamowitz-Möllendorf five weeks later repeated the tale with dithyrambic embellishments. Yet on the 3rd of April 1916, after the German Government had maintained silence on the subject for nearly two years, the officer commanding at Nuremberg issued this statement :

He has no knowledge of bombs having been thrown by enemy airmen on the railways from Nuremberg to Kissengen and Ansbach before the outbreak of war. The statements and information in the newspapers on this subject are manifestly false.

Documentary evidence is produced in *Le Mensonge* to prove that on the night of August 2 the Bavarian Government (in whose territory Nuremberg lies) knew the tale was false and must have informed Berlin. None the less the bombardment of German railways by French airmen at Nuremberg and Carlsruhe was one of the German pretexts for declaring war on France on the 3rd of August. The Carlsruhe affair is nowhere else mentioned and nowhere appears in German histories.

An even more astounding lie was a cock-and-bull story of a French aeroplane attempting 'to destroy buildings near Wesel,' which was another pretext, and was accompanied by the statement on the 2nd of August that 'a French airman has been shot down at Wesel.' *Le Mensonge* points out that Wesel lies 150 miles from the French frontier, and that no German has been able to give the name of the wonderful French airman or his place of burial or internment, nor is there any detail of the hour of the mythical attack. French records establish that the first French aeroplane lost in the War was MF 85, shot down on French territory on the 4th of August. This mysterious Wesel tale is closely connected with another fantasy which appeared in the *Berliner Tageblatt* of August 3 :

COBLENZ, August 2.—The Prefect of Düsseldorf announces that this morning eighty French officers wearing Prussian uniforms attempted in twelve motor cars to cross the Prussian frontier near Walbeck west of Geldern. The attempt failed.

This was made a ground of complaint against France in London and an excuse for the invasion of Belgium. Walbeck lies close to the Dutch frontier, and the grotesque caravan must have passed for at least thirty miles through Dutch territory. The Dutch Government might have been expected instantly to contradict so preposterous a fiction, but it remained silent. The real object of these two tales was, as *Le Mensonge* states, to provide

Germany with an excuse for treacherously attacking Holland, and when the Dutch pluck up sufficient courage to publish their diplomatic correspondence connected with the outbreak of war we shall have further light on these manœuvres.

Other German fabrications about events on the 2nd of August were :

French aeroplanes seen over the Eifel district (Rhineland).

French airship seen at Kerpricht (actually it was a Zeppelin).

French aeroplanes 'bombed' Frankfurt (afterwards the German Press admitted that 'it is not certain whether they were enemy or German aeroplanes').

French troops seized various points in Alsace including the Col de Schlucht (next day the local German commanding officer announced 'the French have crossed the frontier at certain points with patrols and little detachments, but were everywhere repulsed.' The falsehood of even this attenuated version is proved by documents and evidence printed in *Le Mensonge*).

French officers and a doctor caught poisoning well at Metz with cholera bacilli, and shot (publicly denied in German Press on the 4th of August).

It is suggested in *Le Mensonge* that the main reason for this astounding display of mendacity was to enable the German Emperor to declare war without consulting the Federal Council, which by the constitution he could not do except in the case of attack. It is just possible, though not very probable in view of the sheep-like docility which all Germans have displayed, that the Federal Council might have objected to a wanton assault upon Belgium, France, and Russia. At the same time these disgraceful untruths stirred up popular passion in Germany against France, and prepared for a furious explosion of hatred.

In actual fact Germany was the deliberate aggressor against France. This volume contains the most detailed and striking evidence, including depositions, documents, and photographs—all the exhibits in fact wanting in the case of the false German charges—proving that on the 2nd of August German troops at eleven places violated French territory, killing one French soldier and wounding another, while a German officer was killed and three German soldiers were wounded or taken prisoners, on French territory. German airships cruised over French territory in provocative fashion, and on the 3rd of August, before war had been declared, a German aeroplane in the most dastardly manner dropped six bombs on Lunéville. At Joncherey, six miles inside the frontier, Corporal Peugeot was killed on the 2nd of August, but his assassin, Lieutenant Mayer, of the 5th Mounted Jägers, who formed part of the 14th German Army Corps, was shot down and two German troopers were taken prisoners. At Suarce, $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles inside French territory, a French customs official, Laibe, was wantonly shot by a German patrol, but ultimately recovered.

At Reppe a party of German cavalry was caught by the French customs officials inside French territory, and one trooper, Reichmann, of the 22nd Dragoons, was captured. On the morning of the 3rd, some hours before the declaration of war, there were many other violations of French territory, and at various points on French soil three Germans were killed and four were wounded and taken prisoners.

The admissions of the prisoners, the documents seized on the dead, and the evidence subsequently obtained by the French when they advanced into Alsace, show that the orders for these attacks came from the German high command. They were deliberately issued for a strategic purpose, to draw the attention of the French high command to Alsace and make it believe that the main German forces were concentrated there, leaving the Germans free to seize Luxemburg and Belgium. In that design we know that the Germans succeeded. The French concentration was effected towards Alsace; the road through Belgium to Paris was left open.

Nevertheless Herr Bethmann-Hollweg—who undoubtedly knew the real facts, since on the 2nd of August the French Government had protested against the 'flagrant violation' of its frontier by German troops—had the effrontery to declare to the Reichstag on the 4th of August :

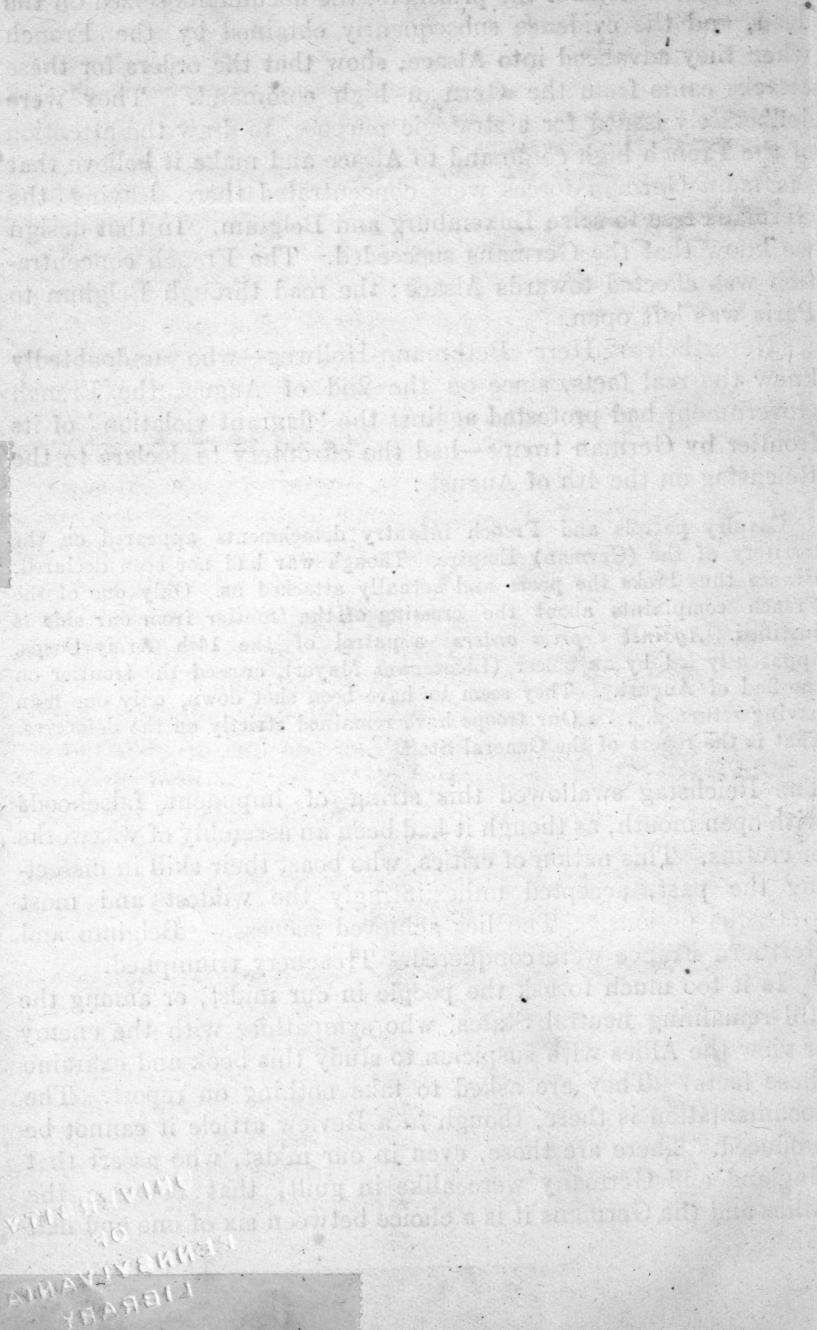
Cavalry patrols and French infantry detachments appeared on the territory of the (German) Empire. Though war had not been declared, France thus broke the peace and actually attacked us. Only one of the French complaints about the crossing of the frontier from our side is justified. *Against express orders* a patrol of the 14th Army Corps, apparently led by an officer (Lieutenant Mayer), crossed the frontier on the 2nd of August. They seem to have been shot down, only one man having returned. . . . Our troops have remained strictly on the defensive. That is the report of the General Staff.

The Reichstag swallowed this string of impudent falsehoods with open mouth, as though it had been an assembly of waxworks or cretins. This nation of critics, who boast their skill in dissecting the past, accepted unhesitatingly the wildest and most grotesque fictions. The lies achieved success. Belgium and Northern France were conquered. Treachery triumphed.

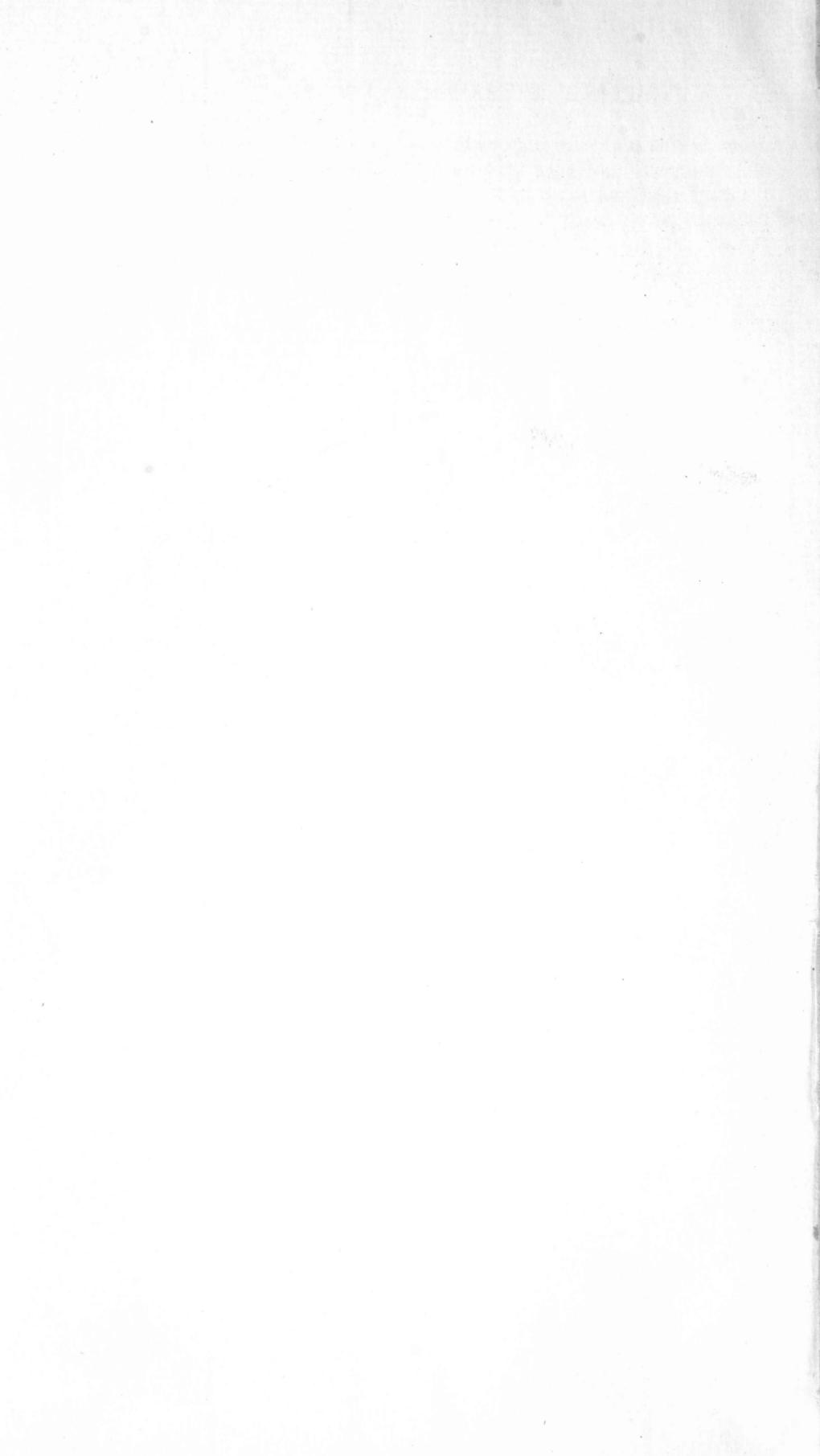
Is it too much to ask the people in our midst, or among the still remaining neutral States, who sympathise with the enemy or view the Allies with suspicion to study this book and examine these facts? They are asked to take nothing on report. The documentation is there, though in a Review article it cannot be produced. There are those, even in our midst, who assert that England and Germany were alike in guilt, that between the Allies and the Germans it is a choice between six of one and half

a dozen of the other. Can those who maintain this thesis produce any evidence of such trickery and deceit on the part of any one of the Allies? If not, and if this tremendous indictment of German perfidy and treachery stands, then is President Wilson's warning fully justified, that the present German Government can never be trusted by any civilised State but must be utterly destroyed.

H. W. WILSON.







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